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RUEWMFU/TSA HQ WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS NAIROBI 003879

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOR DHS/TSA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HAWLEY FROM AMBASSADOR RANNEBERGER

STATE FOR AF, S/CT, AND EB
DOT FOR OST/CHUNTER

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [KE](#)
SUBJECT: Retention of DHS/TSA Kevin Jones in Kenya

Sensitive-but-unclassified. Not for release outside USG channels.

11. (SBU) I understand that TSA's Office of International Transportation Security Networking recently turned down a request from the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Embassy Nairobi for TSA to rehire Kevin Jones as a retired annuitant. The decision, as

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we understand it, would have Mr. Jones replaced within weeks by a series of rotating temporary duty (TDY) personnel. I am writing to ask that you reconsider this decision and agree to allow Mr. Jones to continue working in Nairobi as the East Africa Civil Aviation Security Advisor, a position fully funded by DOT through the Safe Skies for Africa program, until his contract expires in April 2007, after which we would request a permanently assigned replacement.

Terrorism Threat is Active

12. (SBU) Fighting the global war on terror is the number one goal of the United States Government in Kenya, and improving Kenya's capacity to provide aviation safety and security through DOT's Safe Skies for Africa Program (SSFA) is an integral part of our counter-terrorism (CT) strategy. The 1998 and 2002 bombings of the Embassy and the Paradise Hotel demonstrate that lives are at stake. In 2003, the Embassy announced authorized departure for staff and families in response to a credible plot to attack the Embassy with an aircraft. The perpetrators of all three crimes are still at large.

13. (SBU) Kevin Jones was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in April 2004 as the East Africa Civil Aviation Security Advisor (EAASA) until April 2007. He has painstakingly developed a trusting and productive relationship with the Kenyan aviation community that will be very difficult to replace and cannot be maintained through rotating TDY assignments to the position. The relationships built during Kevin Jones' tenure start with the pilot community and progress through the Office of the President. He is a member of the Kenya National Civil Aviation Security Committee, advocating our positions at this body's regular meetings. Mr. Jones is the point person in our efforts to build up the capacity of the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority, the Kenya Airports Authority, and other Kenyan security agencies to counter terrorist attacks against aviation. He performs this function not only in Kenya, but also in Tanzania and Uganda, two other countries in the East Africa region facing terrorist threats. His efforts to enhance institutional capacity in

all three countries have been impressive, but are still incomplete.

¶4. (SBU) DHS/TSA and the Office of the Secretary of Transportation have provided aviation security technical assistance, equipment, training, and consultation services through workshops for approximately 250 Kenyan aviation safety and security personnel through the SSFA Program. Mr. Jones is the person on the ground who continues to ensure this assistance is effective. Key officials in the region, which is under constant terrorist threat, trust and count on his sober counsel in aviation security matters.

¶5. (SBU) Pulling Kevin Jones out of Kenya abruptly and replacing him with a series of TDY personnel would risk unravelling the groundwork he has laid. Experience here makes painfully clear that success in capacity-building requires trust and personal relationships - and these require continuity of personnel. All concerned members of my Country Team believe that a TDY approach simply won't work in this situation. Although Mr. Jones will retire from TSA effective September 30, 2006, Embassy Nairobi urges that TSA allow him to continue serving in Nairobi as a rehired annuitant through April 2007, and assign another TSA officer to replace him before he departs.

¶6. (SBU) I understand that Mr. Jones's position has not been counted on the TSA rolls for the past year and his continuation will have no effect on TSA staffing. TSA is not financially responsible for the position, as all funding support, including salary, is provided by DOT's SSFA program. Mr. Jones' status in the Mission would remain unchanged after his retirement. The same would be true for his replacement.

¶7. (SBU) I look forward to continuing to work closely with DHS. The TSA position is one of the most important DHS positions in this

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Mission. I also want you to know I am prepared to be as flexible as possible in approving several new positions that DHS/ICE and DHS/CBP are requesting for Embassy Nairobi. I ask that you revisit the decision by TSA's Office of International Transportation Security Networking with respect to Mr. Jones on a priority basis. If you need any additional information from this Embassy on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

RANNEBERGER